

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:148

ANSWERED ON:10.03.2008

DISTRIBUTION OF FOODGRAINS

Renge Patil Shri Tukaram Ganpatrao;Singh Deo Smt. Sangeeta Kumari

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether some States have failed to distribute foodgrains to Below Poverty Line families under the Targeted Public Distribution System and Antyodaya Anna Yojana during the last three years and in the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(c) whether any enquiry has been conducted in this regard;

(d) if so, the details and outcome thereof alongwith the present legal provisions for conducting such an enquiry; and

(e) the remedial steps taken and success achieved by the Government in this matter?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a), (b), (c), (d) & (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE STARRED QUESTION NO. 148 DUE FOR ANSWER ON 10.03.2008 IN THE LOK SABHA.

(a), (b), (c), (d) & (e): TPDS is operated under joint responsibility of the Government of India and State/UT Governments. The Government of India carries out procurement of foodgrains for the TPDS, their storage, transportation and allocation to the State/UT Governments. The responsibility for identification of eligible BPL and AAY families within the respective number of BPL households estimated by the Planning Commission and issuance of ration cards to them, allocation of food grains within the State / UT and proper distribution of allocated TPDS foodgrains to eligible families through fair price shops rests with State/UT Governments.

For ensuring availability and distribution of essential commodities to targeted families, the Government issued the Public Distribution System (Control) Order, 2001. As provided under it, State and UT Governments are mandated to ensure that the commodities (foodgrains etc.) allocated under the TPDS reach the targeted families and no leakages / diversions take place. The States and UT Governments are competent to take action under Essential Commodities Act, 1955 against those indulging in malpractices in TPDS.

Under the PDS (Control) Order, 2001, the Central Government is empowered to issue required directions to State / UT Governments for execution of provisions of this Order.

Complaints of malpractices in functioning of TPDS received by Central Government from time to time are sent to the concerned State Governments / UT Administrations directing them to get the complaints enquired into and take necessary remedial action as per law since the State Governments and their officials have all the necessary powers to take such remedial action.

Allocation and offtake of foodgrains (Rice & Wheat) to Below Poverty Line and Antyodaya Anna Yojana under Targeted Public Distribution System during last three years as well as in current year (upto December 2007) are at Annexes - I to IV.

Offtake of foodgrains under TPDS for BPL and AAY categories in some States / UTs has been less than the allocation made. Different reasons may contribute to low offtake of foodgrains in various States/UTs such as local production and higher seasonal availability of foodgrains, availability of foodgrains as part of wages under SGRY, resources crunch faced by States/UTs, narrow difference between prevalent market prices and issue prices under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) during harvest seasons, local food preferences of people, etc.

Review of the functioning of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) to improve its efficiency, accountability and effectiveness is an ongoing process. For strengthening the TPDS, the Government has taken a series of measures. The Government got TPDS evaluated by Programme Evaluation Organization (PEO) of Planning Commission and by ORG Marg. Their reports received in 2005 reported that there were diversions / leakages of foodgrains, inclusion and exclusion errors in identifying targeted beneficiaries and operations of Fair Price Shops (FPS) were not functionally viable.

By considering the shortcomings mentioned in the evaluation reports, to strengthen the TPDS, including curbing of leakages of

diversions, a Nine - Point Action Plan was formulated in 2006. Details of this Action Plan are enclosed in Annexe - V. This is being implemented by State Governments / UT Administrations. Its implementation is being monitored by the Central Government. The State Governments / UT Administrations have been directed to take stringent measures to eliminate leakages and diversions of the TPDS commodities and other malpractices. Implementation of the Action Plan by State and UT Governments has led to improvement in functioning of TPDS.

Additionally, concurrent evaluation of TPDS has been taken up in 26 States/UTs through NCAER and IIPA, New Delhi.

To make functioning of the TPDS more transparent, a revised Citizens' Charter has also been issued in July, 2007 for adoption and implementation by State Governments /UT Administrations. This has facilitated use by citizens of provisions of Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 in relation to functioning of TPDS.

Further, to ensure that TPDS foodgrains reach the targeted families and to minimize scope for their diversion, training programmes for TPDS functionaries and awareness campaign for TPDS beneficiaries are being taken up. Computerization of TPDS has been initiated. Use of new technologies such as Global Positioning System is being piloted. Revised policy on distribution of wheat flour under TPDS has also been issued.